

## **MARY TEASDEL**

**i 1863 - 1937**

**i ARTIST**

**i ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT**

Mary Teasdel always had a love of art in her soul. In 1901 she became the first Utah woman to exhibit at the French Salon when the jury accepted a group of her ivory miniatures. Another salon admitted a portrait entitled, “Dutch Woman Knitting.” She entered two additional ivory miniatures in the International French Exposition—the only Utah artist to do so to that date. She produced works in oil, watercolor and pastels.

Mary graduated from the University of Deseret in 1886 as an art and music major. Her father lost most of his fortune during the Depression and was unable to support his daughters’s dream of studying art in Paris. Within a few months, Mary lost two older brothers and her only sister. Her surviving brother, Harry, had no family of his own so he left his savings to Mary. Her own savings combined with her brother’s gift was enough to fund three years of art school. Mary believed that her talent could contribute something of worth to the state of Utah and to the world.

In 1897, when Mary was thirty-four, Mary and a fellow artist boarded a train for the National Academy of Art in New York City. In 1899, she and another Utah artist, May Farlow, went to Paris to study at the Academie Julian. This was only three years after women were first accepted as students and there were no female instructors. Mary attended classes four hours every morning and three hours every night. She studied with the great Jules whose class required a difficult application process and was limited to the best students.

One of the most important lessons Mary learned at the academy was the tradition of open-air painting. It enabled her to paint beneath the skies of Normandy, at the base of the Wasatch Mountains and on the rocky crags overlooking the sea at Carmel, California.

When Mary arrived back in Utah, she was appointed by Governor Heber M. Wells to the board of the Utah Institute of Fine Arts. Within a year she became president of the Institute.

Mary’s works prove her to be accomplished with portraits and figure studies and with flowers and landscapes. She was sometimes involved in the design process of large architectural projects. During her lifetime, Mary won all main prizes offered by the Utah Institute of Fine Arts. She believed, “Seize the imagination and hold it captive.”